
Health Care & Wellness Committee

HB 2117

Brief Description: Modifying the basic health plan.

Sponsors: Representatives Cody, Morrell, Kenney and Conway.

Brief Summary of Bill

- Revises the Basic Health Plan to enable unemployed workers to maintain their health and avoid risk of financial hardship related to unpaid medical bills as they search for new employment.

Hearing Date: 2/17/09

Staff: Dave Knutson (786-7146)

Background:

Basic Health is a state-sponsored program providing low-cost health care coverage through private health plans.

Basic Health is for Washington State residents who are:

- within Basic Health's income guidelines;
- not eligible for free or purchased Medicare;
- not institutionalized at the time of enrollment; and
- not attending school full-time in the United States on a student visa.

Summary of Bill:

The Basic Health Plan is modified to enable unemployed workers to maintain their health and avoid risk of financial hardship related to unpaid medical bills as they search for new employment. A new category of Basic Health Plan enrollee called an "economic recovery enrollee" is established. To qualify, the enrollee must become involuntarily unemployed on or after September 1, 2008, be unemployed at the time of application, or be receiving

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unemployment compensation benefits. If an economic recovery enrollee becomes eligible for federal funds to provide health coverage, those funds may be used to subsidize the premiums of the enrollee.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.